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ABSTRACT

An analysis of economic, social, and demographic trends can shed light on how two-year colleges and other social institutions will be affected in the future. According to census data, the percentage of children living with one parent increased from 12% in 1974 to 27% in 1994, while the percentage of households without married couples is projected to increase faster than other types of households in the future. In addition, more people will probably be living alone, while the percentage of the population in correctional facilities is expected to continue to increase. The disparity in income between Whites and Blacks and Hispanics also is expected to continue to increase, which will challenge the traditional community college mission. This situation may worsen as welfare reform takes effect, with an increasing proportion of the population having little in common with the traditional middle class. With respect to race, by the year 2005 Hispanics are expected to constitute the largest minority in the United States. The median age of the country's population will increase by 27.5% from 1980 to the year 2000, a trend which has tremendous implications for academic curricula and the continuing education function of community colleges. Community colleges, which disproportionately serve the poor and minority communities, can expect even greater difficulties if these trends prevail. (Contains 12 references.) (BCY)

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Where we're going -- what we know about the world past Y2K

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Where we're going -- what we know about the world past Y2K

Abstract: This paper surveys economic, social, and demographic trends and projections that are likely to affect the community college and those whom it serves.

We live in a rapidly changing world. War is becoming indistinguishable from crime and from terrorism (Van Creveld, 1991). Entities unheard of two decades ago, "non-governmental organizations" are now having significant influence at the national and international levels (e.g., Fernando & Heston, 1997). U.S. cities are being transformed (e.g., Wilson, 1997). Political processes have become both more warlike and more serious (desperate?) about using conflict resolution techniques (e.g., Shonholtz & Shapiro, 1997). One of our most rapidly growing industries is corrections (e.g., Kerle, 1998).

Some of those changes are not as well documented as one might wish; on others, we have a plethora of data, some of it quite consistent. Below I offer evidence that our world is changing in some predictable ways, ways that will likely affect how community colleges and other social institutions will need to do business.

Two-year College Population

If the Department of Education projections are correct, community colleges will become somewhat more efficient in producing graduates, i.e., degrees granted will increase faster than enrollment (see table 1). This change may be due in part to a decline in the enrollment of high-risk recent high school graduates who currently are disproportionately attracted to (and fail abysmally in) transfer programs.

	1998	2005	2008	% change, 1998-2008
2yr Public Enrollment	5,426	5,688	5,864	8.1
Associate Degrees Granted	520	560	579	11.3
Total High School Graduates	2,653	2,976	3093	16.6

Table 1. Projections of college enrollment, degrees conferred, and high-school graduates, 1998-2008. in thousands, from the Chronicle of Higher Education, 3 July 98, A-28. From uncited Department of Education source.

Households – Who lives in them

There are significant differences in household characteristics for children under age 18 by race (see Table 2). About 77% of white children under age 18 live with both parents, while only 37% of black children live with both parents; Hispanic children are intermediate.

Race	Living w/both parents	Living with mother only	Living with father only	Total
White	41,609	10,239	2,096	53,944
Hispanic	6,381	2,937	384	9,702
Black	3,816	6,056	504	10,376

Table 2. Children under 18 living with one or both parents, in thousands, 1996.

http://www.census.gov/prod/3/97pubs/97statab/pop.pdf , table 82.

Projections of household type can be informative (Table 3).

	1997	2000	2005	2010	% Change 1997-2010
Families	69,761	71,669	74,733	77,895	11.6
Married couples	54,319	55,496	57,371	59,308	9.2
Female Householders	11,774	12,272	13,084	13,927	18.3
Non-family households	30,204	31,577	34,086	36,931	22.3

Table 3. Projections by type of household in thousands, based on projections from the 1990 Census. http://www.census.gov/prod/3/97pubs/97statab/pop.pdf table 67.

The number of households containing a married couple will increase, but not nearly as much as other types of households. The largest change in type of household will be the increase in cohabitation by couples who are not married to each other. Since 1970, the number of unmarried couples living in households has increased about seven times (Table 4). Approximately one-third of these households had children under age 15 in them.

	1970	1994
Unmarried Couple Households	523	3,700

Table 4. Unmarried couple households, in thousands. http://www.census.gov/population/pop-profile/adobe/10_ps.pdf

The percentage of children living with one parent increased from 12 in 1970 to 27 in 1994. As of 1994, more than a third of those single parents had never been married. http://www.census.gov/population/pop-profile/adobe/10_ps.pdf

Many implications follow from this. For example, we will have more child abuse, since "living with a stepparent is the single most powerful risk factor for child abuse that has yet been identified (Wilson, 1993). Based on Canadian law enforcement data, children under two years of age were more than 60 times as likely to be killed if living with stepparents than if living with natural parents, even after poverty was accounted for. The risks for surrogate stepparents are roughly comparable.

Of course, in the real world, poverty is an additive or multiplicative factor on social problems such as these. Further, there are very real consequences of child abuse, including increases in criminality, poverty, and problems in school and at work. Each of these factors will be helping to shape our student body.

Household Size

It should not surprise us, given the above data, that the size of the average household has been declining (table 5).

Size

Year	1980	1990	1996
U.S.	2.75	2.63	2.62
South	2.77	2.61	2.58

Table 5. Persons per household, southern U.S. (Delaware to Cklahoma) vs. U.S.

http://www.census.gov/prod/3/97pubs/97statab/pop.pdf table 73.

Table 6 shows that approximately 60 percent of those living alone are female; the number of people living alone has increased significantly in the last few decades, compared to the total number of households. The "living alone" data (table 6) exclude nursing homes and other

congregate housing. Even with those populations excluded, women aged 18-64 who live alone (compared to those living with a spouse) are disproportionately likely to have health problems as indexed by "restricted activity." http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/data/sr10_195.pdf 31July98

	1980	1990	1996	Percentage Change 1980-1996
Number living alone	18,296	22,999	24,900	36%
Percentage Female living alone	62	61	59	-3%
Percentage over 65 living alone	40	40	40	0%
Total Households	80,776	93,347	99,627	23%

Table 6. Persons living alone, 1980-1996, in thousands.

http://www.census.gov/prod/3/97pubs/97statab/pop.pdf , table 84 and table 66.

We have some depressing data on a non-household type of congregate housing, correctional facilities (table 7). As of midyear 1997, we were holding in a secure correctional setting 1 of every 155 U. S. residents. More than 93% of the prison population and more than 89% of the jail population is male. This is a significant social force reducing the number of males, particularly minority urban males, in colleges.

The rate of growth of the correctional population far outstrips the rate of growth of the general population. This rate of growth will continue for some time, as individual states continue to increase the length of sentences, reduce or eliminate parole, reduce the allowable appeals, and in general focus more in incapacitation than on rehabilitation.

	1985	1997	Average Annual Increase, 1990-97
Number of inmates	744,208	1,725,842	6.5%

Table 7. Number of persons held in state or federal facilities or in local jails, 1985 and 1997, from Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 1997, Table 1. US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, January 1998. NCJ 167247

Income and Wealth

Table 8 provides 1995 data (the most recent available) on median household income. Disparity is obvious – the average Black or Hispanic household brings in only about 55% of the income of the average Asian/Pacific Islander household.

Overall	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Island
$34,076	$35,766	$22,393	$ 22,860	$ 40,614

Table 8. Median household income by race, 1995.

http://www.census.gov/hhes/income/income95/in95med2.html

Income does not tell the whole story. Wealth (generally, the value of assets that could be sold), presents a picture of far greater disparity (table 9). Two relationships are obvious. First, the wealth of Whites is approximately 10 times the wealth of Blacks and Hispanics. Second, while the wealth of Whites declined from 1991 to 1993 (the most recent available data), the wealth of Blacks dropped more, and that of Hispanics dropped even further.

This accelerating income disparity will increase the number of disenfranchised residents, reduce their commitment to the larger society, and foment the development of an underclass (Chernomas & Sepehri, 1997). In turn, this will challenge the traditional community college mission.

	1991 (in 1993 dollars)	1993
White	$ 47,075	$ 45,740
Black	$ 4,844	$ 4,418
Hispanic	$ 5,557	$ 4,656

Table 9. Median net worth (asset ownership) of households in 1993 dollars.

http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/wealth/wlth93f.html

Race, possibly as a surrogate for income, has strong effects on other variables. For example, black males are disproportionately likely to miss work days due to restricted activity or disability, and generally ill health. http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/data/sr10_195.pdf 31July98

Table 10 shows that income disparity is not only a function of race. Married couples with children under age 18 bring in almost three times as much income as do single parents with children under 18.

Married, with children	Female with children, no husband present
$ 50,052	17,936

Table 10. Median household Income by marital status, 1995.

http://www.census.gov/hhes/income/income95/in95med2.html

Table 11 shows that the concentration of income has been increasing at the upper end of the wealth spectrum. In effect, the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer.

Quintile of Household Income	1985	1995
Lowest Quintile	4%	3.7%
Highest Quintile	45.3%	48.7%

Table 11. Percent of total household income by quintile.

http://www.census.gov/hhes/income/income95/in95agg2.html

The economic picture is consistently dismal. Income is increasingly concentrated among the rich, with disparate impact along racial/ethnic lines. Black and Hispanic household income is lower than that of Whites, and the wealth of Blacks and Hispanics is far lower than that of Whites. Married couples with children bring in almost three times the income of females with children but without husbands, a finding that cuts across racial and ethnic categories. Since "married couples" is a declining portion of the population, the trend is toward more and more children being born and raised in poverty or reduced economic circumstances.

The picture may become even more bleak as welfare "reform" takes effect and the most upwardly mobile of the poor move into the workforce, leaving hard core poor behind with no way out of the pit as the "safety net" erodes. Instead of solving the problem of poverty, the "reform" of welfare may exacerbate it, particularly in urban areas where hard poverty combines lethally with congestion in criminogenic fashion. In contrast, hard rural poverty at least allows one to avoid the neighbors most of the time.

We likely will be looking at an increasing proportion of our population that has little in common with the traditional middle class. Since the U.S. has always depended on its middle class for stability, this picture augurs ill for our society. More poor people means more perpetrators and more victims of street crime. This will have unfortunate effects on law enforcement agencies as they are increasingly held accountable for that which they cannot control.

On the bright side, poverty is fundamentally a behavioral problem. When behavior shifts, so may economic circumstances. Low income/status individuals move in and out of the lower class all the time--some get out permanently. Some middle class folks fall down there--divorce, drug addiction,

bankruptcy, business failure, whatever--we see it every day--Joe who had the big house is now living in a trailer behind his brother's farm house. At the same time, the unwed mother goes to school and becomes a nurse and is instantly middle class--struggling to be sure, but still making it and paying her bills. There is a modicum of hope.

Change has also come to the workplace. Traditional loyalty to the individual businesses is being replaced by loyalty to the guild, profession, and colleagues (e.g., Webber, 1998). This change implies that the affected employees will need to develop social, business, communication, and mobility-related skills that were not needed until now. Many current employees, lacking these skills, will be have limited choices in tomorrow's workplace.

Geographical Mobility

For most of the past two decades, approximately one out of six households moves its residence each year (table 12). Household mobility is highest among renters rather than home owners; renters are disproportionately poor. Mobility interferes with the sense of community and community activities as well as with continuity of education and family integrity (see, e.g., Putnam, 1995).

	1980-1	1990-1	1995-6
Total U.S. Population	221,641	244,884	260,406
Percent Movers	17	16	16

Table 12. Mobility status of the population, in thousands.

http://www.census.gov/prod/3/97pubs/97statab/pop.pdf table 32.

Race and Hispanic Origin

While the population of Asian/Pacific Islanders will remain relatively small, that population will be the most rapidly growing (table 13). The population of other minorities will be changing as well.

By the year 2005, residents of Hispanic origin will constitute our largest minority. This has implications for both staffing and curriculum.

	2000	2005	2010	Percent Change 2000-2010
White, non-Hispanic	197,061	199,802	202,390	2.7
Black, non-Hispanic	33,568	35,485	37,466	11.6
Amerind, Eskimo, Aleut, non-Hispanic	2,054	2,183	2,320	13.0
Asian/Pacific Island, non-Hispanic	10,584	12,454	14,402	36.1
Hispanic origin	31,366	36,057	41,139	31.2

Table 13. Population projections by race and Hispanic origin, in thousands.

http://www.census.gov/prod/3/97pubs/97statab/pop.pdf table 25.

Sex

The sex distribution of our population will remain relatively stable, although females will continue to outnumber males (table 14).

	2000	2005	2010	Percent Change 2000-2010
Male	134,181	139,785	145,584	8.5
Female	140,453	146,196	152,132	8.3

Table 14. Projections by sex, in thousands.

http://www.census.gov/prod/3/97pubs/97statab/pop.pdf table 24

Age

Unlike the sex distribution, the age distribution will change markedly (table 15). As the baby boomers age, the population aged 55-64 will almost double, and there will be a significant decline

in the population aged 35-44. While the traditional college-age population will grow, that growth will be relatively minor. The median age of the U.S. population will increased by 27.5 percent from 1980 to 2000 (table 16), and will continue to increase.

These changes will have dramatic effects on the work force. Employers will be trying to cope with a rapidly aging work force. They will be looking for ways to develop training and education programs so that those employees are not lost to technological obsolescence. Community colleges will need to position themselves so that they are viable purveyors of these services. The market for these services will be quite competitive, particularly by means of distance learning, customizing, and rapid development of modular training and education.

	2000	2005	2010	Percent Change 2000-2010
18-24	26,258	28,268	30,138	14.8
25-34	37,233	36,306	38,292	2.8
35-44	44,659	42,165	38,521	-13.8
45-54	37,030	41,507	43,564	17.6
55-64	23,962	29,606	35,283	47.2

Table 15. Projections by age, in thousands.

http://www.census.gov/prod/3/97pubs/97statab/pop.pdf table 24

1980	1996	2000	Percent change 1980-2000
28.0	34.6	35.7	27.5

Table 16. Median age. http://www.census.gov/prod/3/97pubs/97statab/pop.pdf table 13.

Education

Education has a strong prophylactic effect on unemployment (table 17), and this effect is expected to continue. Income is also tightly tied to education (table 18) and is like to remain so.

All	<12yrs	HSGrad	Some Coll	Assoc.	Bachelor's	Advanced
5.5%	11.6%	6.1%	5.2%	3.8%	2.8%	2.2%

Table 17. Unemployment rate of people over age 18 and in the labor force by educational attainment, March 1995. (from U.S. Bureau of Census, Current Population Survey, Educational Attainment in the United States: March 1995, PPL-48, Table 6).

All	<12yrs	HSGrad	Some Coll	Assoc	Bachelor	Master	Prof.	Doctoral
25.8	13.7	20.2	20.7	26.4	37.2	46.3	82.7	67.7

Table 18. Average annual income in thousands of dollars by educational attainment for people 18 years old and over with earnings, March 1995. (from U.S. Bureau of Census, Current Population Survey, Educational Attainment in the United States: March 1995, PPL-48, Table 9 and Current Population Reports, P20-489, August 1996, Educational Attainment in the United States: March 1995, Table C.

While a certain degree of employer disdain for formal education is emerging, it is largely due to a shortage of applicants. When job announcements are met by hordes of applicants, degrees and certificates matter very much. Further, the recognition by business that knowledge is a business asset (e.g., Knowledge as capital: Businesses increasingly recognize the value of intangible assets. The Futurist, 1998, 32(4), 6) augurs well for the future of higher education.

Religious Behavior

From 1980 thru 1995, the percentage of U.S. residents attending church or synagogue in the preceding seven days has hovered around 41%. (http://www.census.gov/prod/3/97pubs/97statab/pop.pdf , table 86), while church/synagogue membership has hovered in the upper 60's. At least according to these two measures, our

social organization seems to have maintained some stability. Not surprisingly, church/synagogue membership is highest in the south, and among those over age 65. Those least religious are those under age 30 and those living in the west.

Since our population is aging significantly, we can expect increases in religious interest, membership, and attendance, as well as in religion-related political behavior. This projection has implications for academic curriculum, public service, and particularly the continuing education function of the community college.

Health

Health is related to marital status. Those living with a spouse are less likely to have physical impairments. http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/data/sr10_195.pdf 31July98. Since the proportion of households with a married couple is declining, this does not bode well. Health is also related to wealth; the lower one's income, the more likely one is to be limited in activity, disabled, or otherwise in poor health. Education is significantly correlated with health. The higher the educational level, the fewer untoward health outcomes (disability, impairment, hospitalization) and processes (risk factors such as obesity, smoking). Education also is correlated with protective factors such as preventive medicine and exercise. Since household income is declining, and the welfare system is becoming more restrictive, the prognosis is not good.

Mental health is also an area of threat. Delays in and fragility of marriage may in part be due to increases in depression (e.g., Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Monroe & Depue, 1991). Another indicator is relative popularity of various prescription drugs. In 1996, $4.6 billion was spent in the U.S. for anti-depressants, up 21% over the previous year (http://www.pharmacytimes.com/top200.html 30July98). This trend is expected to continue. Increasing numbers of students will be under the influence of prescription drugs, with unknown effects on their academic and employment performance.

Educational level and income are inversely related and age is directly related to limitations in one's activity level and to poor health in general. http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/data/sr10_195.pdf 31July98. The U.S. population, as noted above, is aging. Therefore our social institutions will be facing more issues related to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Further, as minority populations increase and thus mean educational level and preparation decline, there may be an amplification of this problem for both instructional staff and administrators.

Conclusion

Education in the U.S. is closely tied to both health and wealth (e.g., http://www.fedstats.gov/index20.html 30 July 98. Equally clearly, community colleges disproportionately serve the poor, minorities (and therefore single-parent families), and the educationally ill-prepared. The path from poverty to middle class living is becoming more difficult. There is considerable evidence of the decline of the middle class. Increasingly, community colleges will be serving those who have little hope, have little reason for hope, and who seek solace in legal or illegal drugs. Serving the downtrodden has seldom been profitable for any social institution. We should expect tighter institutional budgets, more oversight, more problematic students, more frustrated faculty, and more difficult times as we attempt to develop curricula, public information and fundraising programs, and generally more efficient and effective ways of doing business.

All in all, bleak. Snyder's intriguing article (Snyder, 1997) asks whether postsecondary education can learn from the postindustrial enterprise, which is facing similar threats. I wonder.

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